Arrian

[1691?]

The Arrian's VINDICATION *of Himſelf, againſt Dr.* Wallis's *Fourth Letter on the* TRINITY.

'TIS an intollerable thing for a Man to pretend to Candour and Ingenuity, and that he argues calmly, and without ſcurrilous Language, as Dr. *Wallis* has done, (*p.* 36.) when his whole Treatiſe is nothing elſe but the Compoſure of a Sinifter Art to ſtifle and confound thoſe Truths he is not able to withſtand: I ſay 'tis intollerable in the *Doctor*, becauſe nothing in His whole fourth Letter has the leaſt grain of weight in it, if one abates its little Subtilties and Artifice.

And I declare farther, that it grieves me to Anſwer him as he deſerves, for fear of having the Character of a Common Railer, for when Deceits are groſs, a Man cannot well expoſe them, as he ſhould do, without he does it in ſuitable Terms; and if he does that, the Story alone is enough to offend a modeſt Ear, and therefore I ſay I am forc'd to make my Reader an Apology in this place, that he will excuſe me in expreſſing what I am neceſſitated to write.

To begin therefore, What a mean and unfair Vein of Reflection runs thro' his whole Book, I may ſay indeed is the whole matter on't: It ſeems a *Socinian* wrote againſt him, and I as an *Arrian* wrote againſt him; and the *Doctor* upon this fancies the *Socinian* turn'd *Arrian*, and then all along in his Diſcourſe, ſetting up the two Opinions together for his Mark, ſhuffles them together, ridicules the Medly, and in the end ingenuouſly cloſes all with what a Turn-Coat of an Adverſary he has met with.

I ſhall not repeat his words about it, becauſe they are too many, and fitter to be read in his Book itſelf, where, if the Reader will pleaſe to caſt an eye, he will find his two laſt Paragrahs, his Cloſe, *p.* 37, 38. incomparably witty upon it.

But, I ſay, is not this a moſt ingenuous, a moſt fair and charitable Method? and does it not become Dr. *Wallis*? Dr. *Sherlock* had twenty Anſwers againſt him near about his *Caſe of Allegiance*, &c. amongſt the reſt Mr. *Parkinſon*'s was one; I ſay, had it not been very pleaſant for Dr. *Sherlock* to have rak'd up all the Abſurdities and Contradictions in theſe twenty Anſwers, and to have flung them upon Mr. *Parkinſon*; I ſay, would it not have been pleaſant for the *Doctor* to have charg'd him for being a Turn-Coat, and to write Contradiction, becauſe ſuch things might poſſibly be found among the twenty Anſwers.

Now

Now, I ſay, if this would be pleaſant, I might add ridiculous, in Dr. *S.* what is it in Dr. *Wallis?* I declare I am neither the *Socinian*, nor his Friend that aſſiſted in his firſt Book; nay, I declare I never was a *Socinian* in my life, no more then the *Doctor*; and why then all this upon me?

Yes, the *Doctor* ſays, I do not ſay that I am not the *Socinian*, p. 1. very pleaſant. I write my Book quite on another Hypotheſis, I give it a Title as if it were to ſtand by its ſelf, as a new Anſwer, and not to Vindicate the *Socinian*; nay, I plainly in it leave the *Socinian* in what peculiarly belongs to him, to Vindicate himſelf; and yet the *Doctor* for all this, for the Jeſts ſake, muſt ſtill fancy I am the *Socinian* in Maſquerade. Good God! what will not ſome Men write, rather than not ſhew their Wit.

Nor is it leſs pleaſant, to ſee what a world of mouldring Arguments he has raiſed totteringly, on this rotten Foundation forſooth, I am not willing to enquire into his *Socinian* Quotations: I ſay I am not concern'd if any Man has dropt imprudent words, *p.* 2, 3. and the *Doctor* takes this for a Point granted: ſurely the *Doctor* has purchas'd an Eſtate in *Utopia* lately, and that 'tis makes him ſo ſtrong in his Imaginations, elſe how ſhould he expect I ſhould defend what he quotes from *Socinus*, more then what he writes himſelf.

An *Arrian* is as much a *Trinitarian* as a *Socinian*, and therefore I think I may juſtly refuſe the *Doctor* that ſatisfaction, and yet not, I ſay, that the *Doctor* has the Point given him on *Socinus* neither, but 'tis not my buſineſs to defend him; and if that will not give the *Doctor* ſatisfaction, he muſt go look for it, for I declare I ſhall not trouble myſelf to ſee what *Socinus* has wrote upon the Matter, whether *pro* or *con.*

Juſt ſuch another Point, *p.* 6. he triumphs in, That I do not vindicate *Socinus* from his denying the Immortality of the Soul, *p.* 4. Alaſs poor *Doctor!* I never ſubſcrib'd Articles to *Socinus* yet, and ſhall no more enquire what he ſays, then the *Moliniſts* do; but whatever the *Doctor* triumphs in this matter, may be his old *Socinian* Adverſary may at laſt take up the Cudgels againſt him, and ſhew him he does not deal ſo fairly with *Socinus* as he ſhould neither: But whether he does or no, the *Doctor* ſhant gain that Point upon me, as to perſwade me it concerns me.

But the *Doctor* ſays I miſtake, and talk of his denying Angels, when he ſaid only the Immortality of the Soul: Alaſs the Charge upon me I thought ſo trifling, that may be I might do ſo, but it ſeems the *Doctor* thinks it conſiderable; and *p.* 5. brings a world

of Arguments to prove the Immortality of the Soul. It ſeems I ſaid, I thought the Reflection uncharitable, but did not ſay I did believe them; and therefore the *Doctor* takes it for granted, he is to Convert me.

I thank him; and to eaſe him for the future, I tell him, I did believe them, as he himſelf wittily Reflects, *p.* 37. I will not diſoblige him by unſaying what was always in my heart to acknowledge; however, that I might not be behind with him in Kindneſs, and becauſe the *Doctor* ſeems hard of Faith, I have a good mind to prove the Exiſtence of a Deity to him, for I have heard of ſome Men of Profeſſion of the Church of *England*, that have almoſt been Atheiſt at the heart.

Well, but I muſt haſten on, the *Doctor* has caught another Point, I have granted him a thing may be one, and three in ſeveral reſpects, *p.* 8. and it ſeems I have yeilded the Point, for 'twas Reaſon only he ſtood upon, and I am fled to Scripture; and ſurely now the *Doctor* has reaſon to triumph as he does, *p.* 9. for his Argument was, Whether a Trinity be poſſible, not whether it is or not; nay, if the *Doctor* has not hamper'd me now, 'tis hard.

The Matter then is thus: The *Doctor* and I are upon ſquare Reaſoning, well, and I in my other Anſwer, *p.* 3. ſay, *'Tis true indeed I cannot ſay that there is a Contradiction in holding that there may be three Perſons in God, becauſe I have not the Definition of the word God ſo exact as to be aſſur'd it cannot admit many Perſons in it; but this I am ſure, that when God has order'd me to acknowledge him but as One, and I know I cannot rationally make him more, but by many Perſons, I vitiate the Commandment by an inconſiſtent Abſurdity to bring in new Perſons after in Coequality with him.*

I ſay then, how can the *Doctor* charge me by this, to fly to Scripture Authority? Alaſs he gallops over the intent and inſinuation of my Argument, and then well may he ſay any thing; but to prevent further Miſtakes it is this; the *Doctor* and I have joyn'd iſſue in, Whether there be a Contradiction in the Trinity or not; at preſent then it being my Task to prove there is, I enter upon the Matter with myſelf thus:

I ſay then to myſelf, there are two ſorts of Contradictions, the one expreſs'd, the other implied, the firſt, or expreſs'd, is thus, *A Man is not a Man*; but this is what I cannot bring to our preſent Caſe, becauſe it is a Contradiction in Terms; therefore let us come to the other, the Contradiction implied, and let us ſee how that will fit us.

I ſay then, a Contradiction implied is when tho' the Terms are

not the ſame, yet as to the matter in diſpute they purport the ſame thing, thus, that S. *Peter*, S. *Paul*, and S. *John* are one Man, for if I have either Idea of Men or Numbers, they muſt be three, and if they are three, the Propoſition implies a Contradiction.

Nor will it be enough to ſay in ſuch caſe, that they are one in ſome reſpect or ſo, for by a Metaphor alſo you may evade the force of the moſt flat and expreſs Contradiction whatever alſo; for inſtance, ſhould I ſay, A Man is not a Man; that is, Mankind is degenerated from what it was; I ſay it is as proper a way of ſpeaking, as to ſay, *Peter*, *James*, and *John* are one, becauſe Chriſtians, and agreeing in Principles.

I ſay then, having ſtated this Idea of Contradictions with myſelf, which is true, if any be ſo: I proceeded to apply it to the Caſe in hand; well then, becauſe I would be the more ingenious with the *Doctor*, I tell him I cannot ſay (that is directly and from myſelf) there is a Contradiction in holding there may be three Perſons in one God, becauſe I have not the Definition of the word God ſo exact, *&c.* Well, but what then, muſt the Diſpute end here, this does but grant I am without an expreſs Definition of the word God, to raiſe an implied Contradiction, and for an expreſs Contradiction, I do not pretend to it.

No, I ſay the Diſpute ſhall not end here, for tho' I will not be preſumptious to define the word God myſelf, without Scripture, nor will not let go my Reaſoning to fly to their Authority; yet I will make the *Doctor* give me that priviledge, as to fetch in the *firſt Commandment* to define the word God, without the *Doctor* is ſo ingenuous as to keep the Argument upon our yea or no of it, for fear of a Deciſion.

Well then, 'tis plain the *Doctor* has gained no Point here neither, but is flying the Field with as many Huzza's he can; his Adverſary is not charging him, whether the thing is, but whether 'tis poſſible, and he meanly cries, that he flies to Scripture, only becauſe he goes about to ſhew the *Doctor* how he has diſtorted the ſence of the word God, which is the Hinge of the Diſpute, and only to be decided by the Scriptures.

The next thing I have to ſpeak to is, he ſays *p.* 10, I make large Conceſſions about the Holy Ghoſt, and about the Perſonality: Alaſs poor *Doctor!* juſt as much as becomes an *Arrian*, had the *Doctor* but known it; and when he reads it next, and conſiders it better, he will ſay ſo too.

But *p.* 12. brings me to a moſt grievous Charge againſt me, he charges me heavily with Miſciting, but alas when I come to ſee what's

what's the matter, 'tis just trifling to the purpose. It seems I have call'd the three dimensions of his Cube three sides, and as a Faulkner is angry, if you say his Hawk shites and not mutes; so the *Doctor* can't bear the least mis-wording to his Notions.

Another thing is, I charge him with talking of two Gods, three Gods, personal Gods. 'Tis true enough, poor Gentleman, I do so by inference, as I do that his Doctrine is contradictious, and when he proves the matter otherwise he shall not be abused so.

Thus likewise there are a world of other charges, but heavy only in imagination, that the *Doctor* lays upon me. He says, the *Arrians* make two Gods, *p.* 13. he forgets that he might have had twenty from them, and that the Scripture it self makes Satan a God, but if he means two Gods coequal, which he must do to make his reflection considerable, he writes without Book.

So he says I banter him, *p.* 15. when I write of blushing for his Similes; whether I banter'd him or not, I am sure he has reason to blush still for his Similies: whatever he says upon the matter, they wont help him up one Rung upon the Ladder nor one Step towards his Journey: in short, all they can prove is, that a thing may be one and three in several respects, which no one but a mad Man as I know would ever deny him.

He tells me, he has a hard Task two please two Masters, *p.* 15. Right; but who set him to meddle with the *Socinians* now? in truth his n'own dear self: He tells me I reflect on God and the Scriptures, to talk of a three-headed Monster, *p.* 15. Methinks he might have staid this till he had prov'd God to be a Trinity, and his Notions of him to be agreeable to Scriptures; but no, a few Colours are the substance of Dr. *W.*'s Rhetorick.

P. 18. The *Doctor* says his Doctrine is as old as the *New Testament*, and that it was never contested till *Arrius* did it. I answer, My Doctrine both is and was the truth till *Alexander* and *Athanasius* disputed it, and whose word must pass in this case, surely tho' I have no mean sence of either the truth or tradition of my own opinion, yet I think neither, I believe we are both fallen upon niceties that the Primitive Christians know nothing of; you, I say, in vindicating an unjust Imposition, and I setting up a more rational Hypothesis to confute it.

P. 19. He is angry, that I should make his personating not to make several persons, when in another place, I say personation is the greatest perfection of Unity; now this I say might be a reasonable objection enough, did Personation only signifie the abstract of personating, but I conceive the *Doctor* has no reason to be concern'd

cern'd if I turn the *Idea* of the word to another ſence, to ſignifie the being a perſon, and if ſo, what I have ſaid concerning his perſonating in my other Anſwer, muſt be valid for all what the *Doctor* has alledg'd.

I ſhall ſay no more of his other Titles, which he tells me are at leaſt a ſtep in his way, but if I am not miſtaken, they are very far from his purpoſe, and I hope for the future he will not inſiſt on them; I declare if he does, I muſt ſay as he does, there is ſomething wanting more than clearneſs to convince him, *p.* 36.

But now I come to his great point of condeſcention, to anſwer me in Scripture, when I have deſerted Reaſon, as he thinks; and here I will join Iſſue with him, that if he has made it out, that one God perſonal muſt not make one God as well as one Man, that is, if the definition of God be not to be one or more by perſons, I ſay if it be not ſo, I ſhall be content to be dragg'd in Chains after his Chariot for a Captive, and to honour his Victory by being a Bondſlave.

P. 24. He ſays Satan and the God of *Echron* are forbidden by the firſt Commandment, and why not Chriſt as well as they? No, he has a Dilemma for that, *p.* 28. Either he is a true God, or a falſe God, if a true God, the ſame with the Father; nay, he tells us alſo, we worſhip the Son: But good God, what an Anſwer this is when one ſees the bottom of it, and how formidable the Horns of his Dilemma are when one ſearches into them a little.

Shall the Scripture make a mean between the ſupreme God and the falſe ones, as it does near 20 times, and ſhall Dr. *Wallis* come and face us out of it? does the Scripture ſay to Magiſtrates, *Ye are Gods*, to *Moſes*, *he is a God*, and muſt theſe be one with the ſupreme God, becauſe they are not falſe Gods? I am ſure, whatever I have done before, I may here juſtly bluſh for the *Doctor* without banter.

But no, he ſays, *p.* 25. theſe perſons are this one God, not added to him. And, good God, what a quirk that is! Are they, ſay you; Pray how came they to be ſo? Did the Commandment ſpeak of them; did the *Jews* ever hear of them before *Chriſtianity*? If not, Muſt not this be an addition of perſons, and a ſneaking begging of the Queſtion, to ſay they are that one God, and not perſon added to him.

So we worſhip the Son, but how? with an appointed honour, not the ſupreme worſhip with mediation, not adoration. If the *Doctor* thinks we owe him other or greater worſhip, he would do well to prove it, and not ſay, we allow it, for I declare we don't.

So as to my argument, that there cannot be many perſonal Gods

Gods, becauſe all between one and Infinites imperfect, *p.* 30. How ſtrangely he ſhuffles, ſays he; you your ſelf own two Gods, and why may not I then three? Alas, I ſay there is but one ſupreme God, and another Creature God, and but honour'd with the Title; and is that to have two Perſonal Gods? I dare not, I ſay, think this to be but a perverſe Wrangling, but, I ſay, does it not look like it?

As to what he ſays of the Text, *Joh.* 17. 3. I have giv'n him a ſufficient anſwer already, and it does not conſiſt with my genius to delight in Tautology; and as for his ſaying, *p.* 29. that Chriſt is called *Alpha* and *Omega* in the *Revelations*, he regards not that that ſtile is as it were in oppoſition to God's ſimpler one, *I am*, nay, and that St. *John* interprets it himſelf expreſly to this ſence, by the ſame Book, in calling him *the faithful Amen*, and *the beginning of the Creation of God.*

He tells us, *p.* 29. that we break the *firſt Commandment*, by having more Gods, whether equal or unequal, and that if we might have many Under-Gods, the *Heathens* were excuſable, who ſet up *Jupiter* above all. Alas, he forgets that all *Trinitarians* call the Father *fons Deitatis*, and the *Heathens* thought *Jupiter* no more. He forgets that the very Scriptures themſelves tells us of ſeveral that have titularly the name of God given them, and we do not think more of the Son, for we hold but one Supreme.

And yet not I ſay but that I think the Son much above any of the other Titular Gods or Angels whatever, for I am not willing that the *Doctor's* Arguments ſhould draw me to diminiſh his honour neither; and therefore let the *Doctor* ſay but that he is a creature and a dependant to God the Father, and let him make him as glorious after that as his imagination can conceive him.

I muſt add here, that there are ſome things in this laſt *Treatiſe* of Dr. *Wallis* that I have really reaſon to thank him for, as that he thinks I have reſpect for the Scriptures, as that he is not without hopes of my converſion, I ſay I am oblig'd to him for this, and I will add this withal too, he that is apt to have good and charitable thoughts of others, cannot be at the bottom an ill man himſelf, and therefore I hope what he has wrote before is through miſtake.

And I might add to this alſo, that I could very well comply with him in the Scripture words, to ſay of the three Divine Perſons, theſe three are one, I believe the Father, through the Son and by the Holy Ghoſt, in one method act all things in relation to the good of Mankind, and provided the abſtract words of Trinity in Unity, implying a Subſtantial Union, be taken away, I am

However, I muſt needs ſay this withal, that if the *Doctor's* Inclinations be ſo moderate, he needed not to have been ſo ſtiff againſt what I wrote before, for I am ſure I did then near ſay as much as I do now, that tho' I am an *Arrian*, yet I hate *Arrianiſm* as bad as *Trinitarianiſm*, I mean to impoſe it on others, and if I ſeek for any thing, 'tis wholly a freedom from the impoſition of others.

And therefore I ſay, becauſe the *Doctor* has been thus hard with me, he obliges me to withſtand him to continue on to ſhew him his reaſoning his abſurd and contradictious, nay more, that he hath not taken notice of ſome of the moſt material paſſages in my Book, to wit, my reproof of his falſe *Idea* of the Perſonality of God, the Impoſſibility and Blaſphemy of his Incarnation, and of the Death of God, I ſay theſe paſſages and more he hath not regarded, and therefore as an Enemy I think I may ſay he has as good as taken them for granted.

To conclude therefore, I think I may juſtly add, I have made good my point againſt the *Doctor*, and have ſhewn his Myſtery contradictious, and as I modeſtly promis'd in the beginning of my firſt Book, not agreeable to the common notions of humane reaſoning, and I will add this alſo, that if I have not abilities to maintain this Poſt againſt the *Doctor*, at leaſt the clearneſs of my Cauſe moves me to ſay ſo, I ſhall be content to be perſwaded out of my Name with my Opinion.

And therefore if I might adviſe the *Doctor*, for I do not love to be upon neceſſity of expoſing a Man of value, I ſay therefore if I might adviſe him, I would have him drop his Cauſe, and leave it to men of more artifice and leſs ſincerity and plainneſs to manage; alas the *Doctor* forgets, he ſhould have but hinted at reaſoning in the caſe, and not ſtood upon it, but fled to the perverſe confuſion of Quotations and Authority, if he would have done as he ſhould do.

It is impoſſible but that Offences muſt come, but Woe be to him through whom Offences come, it were better a Milſtone, &c.

F I N I S.